

Last week we celebrated Valentines Day, a day for the celebration of love. However, our capacity to love is tainted by our sinful nature; every human emotion suffers the effect of sin.

As we have been looking at the emotions of Jesus, his love is pure and untainted by any sin. His love is perfect, yet he commands us to love the same way as he loves (See John 13:34-35). Can we love like Jesus? Jesus displayed selfless and sacrificial love. Where does love come from?

### **God Is Love**

This is a fundamental statement about the nature of God; thus, the essential nature of Jesus is love. Satan will constantly attempt to twist the understanding of the nature of Jesus.

The Bible says, "God is love", the world says, "Love is love." With the notion that love is something that we possess and define, ignoring the pure and essential nature of God as being the source of love. In John 14:7, we read, "*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*" Real, authentic love has its source in God. And loving others with this God-fueled love gives evidence that we have been born of God, we have been born again.

This is not only loving people who love us, but also those who are hurting us, annoy us, and even our enemies. This is the supernatural love of God because this is what He displayed on our behalf. Love is a fundamental aspect of God's nature. All that he does is ultimately loving. God does *have* wrath, but He *is* love.

Dane Ortlund writes this, "*For God to cease to love His own, God would need to cease to exist, because God does not simply have love; He is love.*"

John 14:8 challenges us, "*Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*" We simply cannot love our enemies without the love of God empowering us to love. And the great news of the Gospel is that God made the first move, simply because we are not capable of loving this way. "*In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.*" John 14:9.

### **You Are Loved**

God loves us so much that He sent His only son to free us from the bondage of sin and the penalty of separation from God. Jesus was sent by the Father as the spotless lamb to be

sacrificed to atone for our sins. Jesus walked into enemy territory to rescue sinners like us. We were not looking for God; he is reaching towards us. God took the initiative. God sent His Son to die (see Romans 5:8). Christian love is based on this. It is not simply excusing sin or allowing someone to do whatever they want. Christian love is standing in the gap; it is in the shape of a cross.

Do you know how much Jesus loves you? The love that Jesus has for you now is the same love that compelled Jesus to go to the cross. Knowing that we are fully and perfectly loved by the creator of the universe changes the way we respond to life's situations and how we make choices.

### **Knowing that Jesus loves me...**

#### **...Enables me to Love Others Well.**

As we are in Christ, living by the power of His Spirit, then the supernatural love of God flows through us for the world to see. Displaying love is practical; it is action and costs us something, but this is the normal Christian life (see Romans 5:5).

#### **...Enables me to Love His Bride.**

This is not the same as loving our neighbor. This is love within the church, which is what 1 Corinthians 13 is all about. By living out the love of God, we can display the nature of God for others to see. The attractional or seeker-sensitive church model is still prevalent in many circles; the church tries to have the best preacher, music, sound, lights and programs to be attractive to the community. However, the most attractive church is one that loves one another, how attractional are we?

#### **...Enables me to Endure suffering**

Suffering is a sad and tragic part of living in a fallen world. We know that Jesus healed many people while walking the earth, and he still heals today in response to prayer. But what about the times when Jesus does not heal, when the suffering does not ease?

Knowing that Jesus loves us with a perfect love enables one to go through suffering (see 2 Corinthians 4:17). If we know how much Jesus loves us, we will trust him to take us through suffering even if it takes all our lives.

#### **...Enables me to Trust Him for My Future**

If we know that we are overwhelmingly loved by Jesus, the future does not hold any fear or anxiety for us. In Matthew 6:26-27, Jesus tells his disciples to not be anxious. We are prone

to be anxious about the future, and the root of anxiety is that we don't believe that we are deeply loved by the creator of the universe.

**...Enables me to Trust Him with My Finances**

In the same way as our future, we can trust the Lord with finances. When we have a need, we can go to him. When he tells us to give sacrificially, we don't hold back because we know and believe that He owns it all and is able to provide for all our needs (see Psalm 37:25).

**...Enables me to Go Where He Leads**

This is the same as trusting the Lord for our future, when the Lord opens the door or leads us to a big life change; a new career, move across the country, or the world as a missionary. Whatever He leads us to do, we can trust him because we are fully loved.

Do you know how much you are loved?

It affects every aspect of your life.

You are more deeply loved than you could possibly imagine.